

Advisory Council on Aging and Disability Services

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Creating choices for elders and adults with disabilities in Seattle-King County

MONTHLY MEETING

FEBRUARY 11, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT

CITY OF SEATTLE	KING COUNTY	UNITED WAY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thelma Coney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gabriel Cohen, Vice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Martha Becker
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Joanne Brekke	<input type="checkbox"/> Helen Spencer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lorna Stone
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adam John	<input type="checkbox"/> John Holecek	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thelma Pegues
<input type="checkbox"/> Alexandra Tu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Barnett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timmie Faghin, Chair
<input type="checkbox"/> Tom Rasmussen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larry Verhei	<input type="checkbox"/> Don Moreland
<input type="checkbox"/> Larry Low, Secretary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lisa Yeager, Member At Large	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suzanne Wiley
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Houston Brown	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Midge Levy
<input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Robert Gross	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant
<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Vacant

Excused Absence Larry Low, Helen Spencer, John Holecek

Guests Debbie Thiele, Sherry Catlett, Eileen Murphy, Irma Farsch, Ninfa Quiroz

ADS Staff Pamela Piering, Rosemary Cunningham, Linda Wells, Karen Winston, Margaret Casey, Maria Langlais and Marcy Kubbs

United Way Staff Linda Woodall

**King County
Staff**

MINUTES

Timmie Faghin, Chair convened the Advisory Council meeting at 12:00 p.m. and invited everyone attending to introduce themselves. She then introduced **Pamela Piering**, Director of Aging and Disability Services who provided a presentation on the Washington Association of Area Agencies on Aging (W4A) Legislative Agenda.

PROGRAM TOPIC

SOCIAL & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: W4A LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Pamela Piering provided a PowerPoint presentation on the W4A legislative agenda that included the following topics.

In association with the Area Agency on Aging for Seattle-King County and sponsored by:



City of Seattle



King County

Maintain In-Home Care

In-Home Care allows seniors and adult with disabilities to receive care at home rather than in more expensive care settings such as nursing homes. W4A advocates that the Legislature maintain the current eligibility criteria for COPES, Medicaid Personal Care (MPC), and CHORE rather than making it more restrictive.

Increase Respite Care

The majority of caregivers are unpaid and suffer high rates of illness, depression and mortality. Caregiving is emotionally stressful and physically demanding. Oftentimes, decisions to place loved ones in an institution are due to caregiver burnout rather than health changes in a loved one. Respite Care supports caregivers so they can take care of themselves and continue to provide long-term care to a family member. W4A recommends increasing the funding for this program to keep pace with the growing number of caregivers.

Raise State Medically Needy Income Level

“Medically Needy” clients are low-income elderly or individuals with disabilities who qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), except that their income is too high. They can become eligible for coverage once they meet a medical expense or “spenddown” requirement which is based on the client’s income level. Currently the state guideline allows only \$599 of the client’s monthly income to go for non-medical expenses such as food, clothing and shelter forcing some clients to make hard choices between food and medical care, or a nursing home instead of care at home. W4A supports increasing the Medically Needy Income Level to the federal poverty level which would provide participants with \$776 per month for non-medical expenses.

Continue Funding for Pharmacy Assistance & Education

The Pharmacy Assistance and Education program educates seniors about prescription drugs. It educates adults on wise medication use, and increases seniors access to drug discount cards and other programs that assist in obtaining needed medications. The W4A recommends continued funding for this program to provide consumer education on prescription drug safety and to assist seniors in accessing prescription medications they can’t afford.

Restore Previous Cuts to SCSA

The Senior Citizen’s Services Act (SCSA) funds the Information and Assistance (I & A) program that links individuals to information and needed services. I & A provides a single point of entry for information, assessment and service access. In 2002, the Legislature cut SCSA funding by 15%. W4A believes it is necessary to restore the \$649,000 reduction to SCSA and provide a 10% increase to meet demands for services associated with population growth.

Fund Senior's Farmer's Market Program

This program provides fresh fruits and vegetables which can prevent expensive health conditions and supports healthy aging. Nine thousand individuals were served in 2004 through the program that provides vouchers redeemable for free produce from local farmer's markets. The Legislature needs to fund the Senior's Farmer's Market nutrition program whose funding has expired.

Current Bill Issues

HB 1365 speaks to the state contracting for Medicaid case management to "alternative delivery systems". Currently the Area Agencies on Aging provide the in-home case management to the State's long-term care clients. W4A opposes this bill in its present form as it fails to provide a definition of "alternative delivery systems". In addition, the W4A believes there is a need for legislative review for the multiple new alternative programs that could have major fiscal and service system impacts. Furthermore, HB1220 that provides for the development of a taskforce to study long-term care issues would be a better vehicle for exploring the development of alternative delivery systems.

Pam introduced Debbie Thiele with the King County Housing Authority (KCHA) who reported on current issues affecting affordable housing. The "Section 8" housing program provides rent subsidies for low-income families through a voucher system. KCHA vouchers house 8,200 families and Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) vouchers house about 6,000 families. Congress recently reduced allocations and approved a new funding formula which has resulted in a \$3.5 million reduction for KCHA and a \$4 million reduction for SHA for 2005. KCHA indicates it may have to eliminate 375 vouchers from their program. SHA is still evaluating how to deal with the reduced funding, but indicates at a minimum they will not be able to provide any new vouchers.

Advocacy 101

Pam Piering, Gabe Cohen, Larry Verhei and Joanne Brekke provided a number of suggestions on how to successfully advocate on issues with Legislators. Among the suggestions provided were:

- Share your concerns, but also listen non-judgmentally when meeting with legislators;
- Know the issues your Legislator is interested in by checking the Legislature's website for committee assignments;
- Be brief and use humor;
- Be honest if you don't know the answer to a question;
- Acknowledge the financial problem the Legislature faces;
- Thank Legislators for making (not taking) time to meet with you.

BUSINESS MEETING

Action Taken: It was moved/seconded and passed that the December 10, 2004 minutes be approved as presented.

COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE REPORTS

Planning and Allocation Committee

Thelma Coney reported that ADS staff reviewed Family Caregiver funding scenarios with the P&A Committee in preparation for the 2005 Family Caregiver Support Program (FCSP) Request For Proposals (RFP). Committee members recommended the following to the Sponsors:

- Focus on services that make a difference in reducing caregiver burden.
- Increase funding for Respite from \$100,000 to \$120,000 to increase direct service hours provided to each client. Assign unused funds to Respite as needed.
- Increase flexible funds to the maximum level allowed (20% of total FCSP funds).
- Maintain current funding to the core Caregiver Information and Assistance services.

The RFP will distribute funds to service areas such as special caregiver information and assistance, training, counseling, and support groups.

Outreach and Advocacy Committee

Gabe Cohen indicated that at the March 11, 2005 meeting of the **Outreach and Advocacy Committee**, he will ask members to evaluate how well the Council did on achieving its goals for 2004. He indicated that in order to increase the Council's effectiveness it is important to look at the past and evaluate accomplishments. Gabe also described "Conversation Cafes" which are hosted, drop-in conversations in public places among people of diverse views. He briefly described the agreements participants of these conversations adhere to such as listening with respect and suspending judgment of others. He suggested the Council may wish to adopt these guidelines as the manner in which the Council wishes to hold discussions among its members.

Communications Committee

Maria Langlais, ADS staff, reported on the new W4A On-Line Advocacy Tool. This web-based pilot project, uses technology allowing individuals to select pre-developed messages supporting or opposing legislation, or to develop their own e-mail messages that the website will distribute to designated legislators. The Advocacy Tool which W4A has approved for piloting on their website will soon be available at: www.agingwashington.org.

Maria briefly described the Neighborhood Quality of Life Survey (NQLS) that will evaluate the impact of numerous neighborhood "walkability" factors on the amount of exercise residents engage in. Researchers will send a letter to several King County neighborhoods seeking participants. Maria asked both for feedback on the letter as well as Council approval to be co-signers on the letter.

Action Taken: It was moved/seconded and passed that the Council endorse the research project, approve putting the revised letter on Advisory Council letterhead, and sign it.

The Advisory Council members discussed their on-line magazine "Senior's Digest". They provided suggestions for improvements such as getting information from a variety of sources, and adding a cartoon or other humor to the publication.

The Communication Committee currently has vacancies and welcomes the participation of other Council members.

Health Care Task Force

Larry Verhei reported that on February 17, 2005 at 8:00 a.m. there will be a hearing on HB 1366 relating to Hearing Aid Insurance. He also reported that the Medicaid Act favors married couples as it allows couples to retain \$40,000 in assets, while single individuals can only retain \$2,000. Peter Greenfield of Columbia Legal Services has advised that this discrepancy can be fixed at the state level.

Larry also reported that Martha Becker has agreed to serve as the co-chair of the Health Care Task Force.

Universal Design Coalition

Margaret Casey, ADS staff, reported that the Universal Design Coalition which grew out of the Housing Task Force will soon be celebrating its first year as a coalition. Housing is an integral need of seniors, and Universal Design promotes designing housing so that individuals can age in place.

At the last meeting of the Universal Design Coalition, Dr. Margaret Kitchel spoke about the Center for Disease Control (CDC) grant her Feet First program has to evaluate the "walkability" of areas in the city. Her organization will be performing five "Walking Audits" and is looking for individuals interested in participating in the audits.

Margaret also reported that Dr. Sandra Hartje at Seattle University has surveyed professionals in the field and is developing the first standards for Universal Design in the U.S. She also reported that Universal Design is now a required part of the curriculum for Interior Design students at Seattle University. Students will receive instruction from Susan Duncan who is trained both as a Registered Nurse and Interior Designer. Some of her students will be working with a developer who is planning to build a home incorporating Universal Design features, that will be completed in time for the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (N4A) conference in July, 2005.

Also, the date for the next Aging in Place workshop has been selected. It will take place at Seattle Center on November 12, 2005.

Cash and Counseling Program

Joanne Brekke reported she attended a recent meeting of the Cash and Counseling “Think Tank”. The Cash and Counseling program is a pilot project with \$350,000 in grant funding that will serve 750 individuals over a three-year period. After a case management assessment individuals will receive money so they can purchase the own services. The “Think Tank” consists of 15 individuals whose goal it is to broaden the choices for personal care. Joanne reports the project faces many questions including:

- How will one be sure client’s needs are met?
- How will the money individual’s receive be supervised?
- How will the cognitive ability of individuals be assessed?
- How will they be sure those with limited cognitive ability will get their needs met?

She reports being skeptical that answers to these questions will be resolved prior to the program’s start date.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Pam Piering reported that the W4A Advocacy Day will be held on Tuesday, February 22nd. She invited Advisory Council members to join the all-day event which will provide members with an opportunity to meet with their Legislators to advocate on issues of concern to them. Transportation and lunch will be provided and appointments will be arranged with the Legislators. Please contact ADS staff if you are interested in attending.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Friday, April 8, 2005
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.
13th Floor Conference Room
Alaska Building
618 Second Ave, Seattle, WA 98104
www.adsadvisorycouncil.org

Gabe Cohen, Vice Chair _____